

DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS **AND THOSE WHO PERMITTED THEM**



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Allah (*tabaraka wa ta'ala*) said, “And whoever opposes the Messenger after the right path has been shown clearly to him, and follows other than the way of the believers, We shall keep him in the path he has chosen, and burn him in Hell - what an evil destination” (4:115).

Imam ibn Kathir (*rahimahullah*) said in his *tafsir* that this “refers to whoever intentionally takes a path other than the path of the *Shari‘ah* revealed to the Messenger (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*...deliberately after the truth has been made clear, apparent, and plain to him.”

Shaykhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) said: “Repelling *takfir* from the scholars of the *Muslimin*, even if they were mistaken, is one of the most deserving of the *Shari‘ah* purposes” (*Majmu’ al-Fatawa*, v. 7, p. 284).



INDEED, ALL PRAISE belongs to Allah. We praise Him, seek His aid and forgiveness. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of our souls and the evils our deeds. Whomsoever Allah guides then no one can misguide, and whomsoever Allah leaves to stray then no one can guide. I bear witness that there is nothing worthy of worship except Allah, with no partner in association with Him. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and His messenger. May the *salah* and *salam* [of Allah] be upon him, his family, his companions, and whoever follows his guidance. As for what follows:

Verily, according to us, democratic elections is not a matter open to *ijtihad*. No. It is an issue that is *qat‘i* (clear cut and explicit). Because there is no room for *ijtihad* in an issue that hands over the authority of rule and legislation to other than Allah (*ta‘ala*). Likewise, the ballot boxes are not a legitimate means to establish and rule by the *Shari‘ah*. Due to the fact that they are a part of that system that hands over the authority of rule and legislation to other than Allah (*‘azza wa jall*), is *the* reason for that outcome, and *cannot* be separated from it.

I also know that some students of knowledge and *'ulama* had an incorrect impression and understanding of these types of elections, due to some *shububat* (misconceptions) and *tawilat* (interpretations), that made them pass various *fatawa* on the permissibility of participating in said elections. We know for certain that their speech is *batil* (falsehood) and their *shububat* don't stand up under pressure and scrutiny and that much *fasad* (corruption) came from them. But at the same time, the *'ulama* who view democratic elections as *kufr* do not see them as having fallen into *kufr* for saying it is permissible because of their *jahl* of the *haqiqah* (lit. transl.: ignorance of the true nature) of democratic elections and not intending the *kufri* meaning that their speech and *fatawa* imply or might look like.

What is meant here by the saying “*jahl* of the *haqiqah*”? What is meant by *jahl*, which is translated into English as ignorance, is “conceptualizing something contrary to as it is in reality.”¹ Thus when it is said that they have *jahl* of the *haqiqah*, it does not mean that they simply do not know what elections are or that they do not know that both the candidates are *kuffar* who obviously rule by man-made laws. That is not what is meant. They have a wrong understanding of the true nature of elections and defined it in a way that is contrary to its true nature. That is *jahl* of the *haqiqah*. Conceptualizing a matter in contradiction to how it actually is. If they knew the *haqiqah* of democratic elections and understood it how they are in actuality, that being the fact that they a part of the democratic system as a whole and *cannot* be separated from it and that they are *the* reason for giving the authority to rule and legislate to other than Allah, and still gave a *fatwa* for its permissibility, they would disbelieve by it. Because when the outcome is *kufr*, then the reason for it is also *kufr* due to the principle that states: “declaring the *sabab* (reason) of a certain thing permissible, is declaring it (i.e., the outcome) permissible.”² And also due to: “What can not be divided and separated, then, choosing some it is like choosing all of it and negating something from it is like negating all of it.”³

¹ Al-Juwayni, *Al-Waraqat*.

² Ibn Daqiq al-'Id, *Sharh 'Umdah al-Ahkam*, p. 11.

³ As-Subki, *Al-Ashabah wan-Nadhair*, v. 1, p. 105, p. 152. See Hassan, *A Question on Democratic Elections* for more details on its *kufri* nature.

But these in question did not intend this *kufri* meaning and thought of elections differently to its reality and that they were giving a *fatwa* for something else. They conceptualized elections in a manner that is contrary to how they actually are. Many looked at these elections outwardly and saw them just as a way of supporting one *kafir* over another *kafir* for a benefit. Others just looked at it from the angle as elections being *mubah* (permissible) in its *asl* (foundation) and that it depends on the intention of why one is selecting this one over the other. Others still, saw it just as preferring one group of *kuffar* over another group of *kuffar* similar to how the *Sahabah* (*radiyallahu 'anhum*) preferred the Romans over the Persians. All of them viewed elections as independent from its *kufri* outcome: ruling by other than what Allah revealed or legislating laws.

Now, that is falsehood, and we know that with certainty. However, the issue that is being highlighted here is what they saw and interpreted the elections as. They did not see elections in the way that they are in reality and as we know them to be and how we described their essence above. They do not correlate elections and ruling by other than what Allah revealed or legislating laws together and separated between them.

Did they know that both groups in question are *kuffar* and that they would rule by other than what Allah revealed or legislate laws? Of course! If they did not know that, their "*jahl*" would be "*jahl al-basit*";⁴ and that is not the *jahl* that is commonly invoked or meant. The *jahl* here, like it has already been said, is conceptualizing something that is contrary to how it actually is. They disbelieved in the foundational concept of democracy, which is giving the authority of rule and legislation to the children of Adam, but separated elections from this core root that democratic elections spring up from and did not see the outcome being directly connected to its cause (i.e., democratic elections). The outcome (i.e., ruling by other than what Allah revealed or

⁴ Meaning, simple ignorance like not knowing what is in the depths of the seas. In relation to Muslim lands the people have *jahl* of the *haqiqah* of elections and the *bal* of the "Islamists" and do not think them as legislators; rather, they think that they will rule by the *Shari'ah*. Their *jahl* is the same type here and not "*jahl al-basit*" as they conceptualized them contrary to their actual nature.

legislating laws) is clear *kufr* but they did not link that outcome with elections.

To elucidate: if you perform *du'a* for one of the parties to win in a democratic election, that could be seen as seeking a means for them to win and obviously they will rule by *kufr*. However, you did not ask Allah to grant them authority over the other party due to that outcome but only due to a benefit you might have saw that would come from them winning. This is the rationale of the likes of these; *du'a* is *mubah* in its root and selecting individuals over other individuals is *mubah* in its root. It may be difficult for whoever understands the proper essence of democratic elections, due to the favor of Allah upon him, to possibly comprehend this or understand the principles surrounding the issue of *kufr* and *takfir*, but when you look at it from their point of view and comprehend the reality of *kufr* and when someone becomes a *kafir*, it really becomes very clear, by Allah's permission.

The fact that democratic elections is *qat'i* in its *kufr* to some does not mean that it is like that for everyone else. An issue could arise that is *qat'i* to a group while it is not anywhere close to that for others. Similar to this are the rulers today who rule by man-made laws. Their affair and *kufr* is *qat'i* to us, due to the favor of Allah, but due to many *shububat* and *tawilat*, it is not *qat'i* to others in that if they opposed it they fall into *kufr*. In fact, it could be argued that the *kufr* of those who rule by man-made laws is more explicit and clear than the matter of democratic elections; so those who do not elaborate on the issue of democratic elections and declare everyone who made a mistake concerning it,⁵ would also need to do the same to all those who view or viewed those rulers as Muslim and declare them as *murtaddin* without any elaboration. On this point, Shaykhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) said:

The issue of being *qat'i* or *dhanni* (speculative)⁶ are from those matters which accompany the situation of the belief of the person. It is not a description of the statement by itself. Because a man may find a thing

⁵ And these are many from the *'ulama*: Ahmad Shakir, as-Sa'di, 'Abdullah 'Azzam, to name a few.

⁶ For a more detailed definition of these two terms see al-Khallaf, *Ilm Usul al-Fiqh*. But basically, something that is *dhanni* can accept *ijtihad*, whereas *qat'i* can not.

to be explicit which he would know by necessity, or through a transmission whose truthfulness is known to him. While other than him may not know it as *qat'i* or *dhanni*. A person may be intelligent, strong in mind, and quick in understanding and so he knows the truth or it becomes definite for him, while others do not know it either by knowledge or by speculating. Thus being *qat'i* or *dhanni* is according to the proofs that have reached a person and in accordance with his ability to infer from them. And people are different concerning these. A matter being definite or speculative does not necessarily imply the description of the disputed statement in that it is said: 'whoever has opposed it has opposed what is *qat'i*.' Rather, it is the description of the condition of the belief of one looking to extract [the proof]. And this is where people differ.⁷

In sum, the matter was not explicit to them, and they did not intend the *kufri* meaning of what their words implied and necessitated; and intending the *kufri* meaning is a must in order for the *sabab* of *kufri* to apply on a specific person. One should be aware that that is in contrast to intending the *kufri* meaning but not intending *kufri*. This latter situation is not excusable except by *ikrah*. A clear example can highlight the difference:

- 1) A person sees a book on a table and decides to throw the book away in the trash. However, it turns out that the book was a *mushaf*. And disrespecting the *mushaf* in such a way is *kufri*. This person intended the action but did not intend the *kufri* meaning that the action implied.
- 2) A person sees a book on a table and decides to throw the book away in the trash. However, he knows that this book is a *mushaf*. And disrespecting the *mushaf* in such a way is *kufri*. This person intended the action and the *kufri* meaning that the action implied but did not intend to disbelieve by that (i.e., he did it out of jest, for example).

Therefore, taking and building upon that example and relating it to what we

⁷ *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, v. 19, p. 211.

are discussing here:

- 1) A person is asked about picking between two groups of *kuffar* in an election that will give them authority in the land and says to select the best one. However, the reality of the matter is that these elections are *the* reason for and a part of ruling by other than what Allah revealed or legislating laws. This person intended the action but did not intend the *kufri* meaning that the action implied.
- 2) A person is asked about picking between two groups of *kuffar* in an election that will give them authority in the land and says to select the best one. However, he knows that these elections *cannot* be separated from the democratic process and that they a part of and *the* reason for ruling by other than what Allah revealed or legislating laws. This person intended the action and the *kufri* meaning that the action implied but did not intend to disbelieve by that (i.e., he did it for a worldly benefit, for example).

In the above two situations,⁸ the former of the individuals, although he intended the action, did not fall into *kufr* because he did not intend the *kufri* meaning behind the action. While the latter intended both the action and *kufri* meaning that went along with that action but did not intend to disbelieve. Similar to this are those who misinterpreted some of the texts related to the *sifat* of Allah and interpreted them away from their true nature.⁹ Denying any of the *sifat* of Allah is *kufr* but the one who misinterprets some of the texts concerning them hasn't fulfilled the reason for *kufr* which is denying the texts. They are *jabil* of the *haqiqah* in a way and lack the intention of the *kufri* meaning. If they knew the *haqiqah* and intended the *kufri* meaning (i.e., denial) they would fall into *kufr*. So know and recognize the difference.

Therefore, the relied upon *'ulama* do not rush in declaring each specific individual as a *kafir* until it is known that their *shubbah* is removed and the

⁸ Admittedly, the first of the examples is extreme in its clarity, while the latter is more obscure. This is to emphasize what is intended.

⁹ And these are many from the *'ulama*: ibn Hazm, ibnul-Jawzi, an-Nawawi, ibn Hajr, to name a few.

falsehood of their *tawilat* of the true nature of democratic elections is made apparent to them. The likes of these¹⁰ do not disbelieve in the *tawhid* of Allah (*‘aẓẓa wa jall*) and in the message of Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillah (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) until the truth of the matter is clarified to them, their misconception removed, and then they insist on their falsehood.

“No one is permitted to declare *takefir* of someone from the *Muslimin*, even if he was in the wrong and mistaken,” Shaykhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) stated, “until the evidence is established against him and the outcome [of his speech] is clarified to him. The one whose Islam is affirmed with certainty is not removed from him due to uncertainty. Rather, it is only removed from him after the proof is established and the misconception removed.”¹¹

He also said: “Likewise, the texts of threats being applicable to a specific person is conditioned that he was not someone with a *tawil* and not a mistaken *mujtahid*. Verily, Allah has forgiven this *ummah* for what it does mistakenly and out of forgetfulness.”¹²

And he said about some people mistakenly denying certain matters that the Prophet (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) came with: “These do not disbelieve until the evidence of the Message is established against them, as Allah (*ta‘ala*) said, ‘in order that mankind should have no plea against Allah after [the coming of] the Messengers’. And indeed, Allah has forgiven this *ummah* for its mistakes and forgetfulness.”¹³

And he said: “Indeed, the one who has a misinterpretation with the intention to follow the Messenger (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) does not disbelieve or fall into *fisq* when he strives [to reach the truth] but makes a mistake. And this is well known to people in regard to issues of actions but concerning the issue of

¹⁰ The same applies to those who mistakenly used *shar‘i* principles like *darurah*, slipping it under *ikrah*.

¹¹ *Majmu’ al-Fatawa*, v. 12, p. 466.

¹² *Ibid*, v. 27, p. 474.

¹³ *Ibid*, v. 35, p. 166.

creed many people declare *takefir* of those who make a mistake in it. And this type of speech is not known from the *Sahabah* and *Tabi'in*, and it is not known from anyone from the leading scholars of the *Muslimin*. In its *asl*, it only stems from the speech of the people of *bida'*.”¹⁴

Even though all these statements from ibn Taymiyyah, and others similar to them which I left out, are in relation to matters that are obscure and not apparent and known in the *din* by necessity, some issues that are apparent can become hidden to some people; and *jahl* of the true nature of something falls under mistakes.¹⁵ This has happened many times through the *ummah's* history and it happened in the time of the *Sahabah* (*radiyallahu 'anhum*) when Qudamah ibn Madh'un, and those with him, made drinking alcohol permissible for the righteous due to them misinterpreting the *ayah* that states: “And those who believe and do righteous good deeds, there is no sin on them for what they consumed, if they fear Allah.”¹⁶

When 'Umar ibnul-Khattab and other *Sahabah* (*radiyallahu 'anhum*) heard about this did they declare *takefir* at the drop of a dime? No. Before declaring them *murtaddin* and dwellers of the Fire they investigated the matter and went to clarify the issue to them. Qudamah ibn Madh'un (*radiyallahu 'anhu*), a man who attended the Battle of Badr, was someone with a *tawil* within the spheres of the lands of Islam. He did not declare alcohol completely permissible, as that could not be accepted, but thought that it was permissible for a certain group of the *ummah*. Meaning, he had a *tawil* of a part of the issue while forbidding the *asl*; and the forbiddance of alcohol does not accept being split up.

Taking a practical example of having a *tawil* of the *haqiqah* and a *tawil* of a part of the issue of democracy while forbidding and disbelieving in its *asl* is the case of ibn 'Uthaymin when he was asked in a gathering about presidential elections taking place in America. He replied to select the one most beneficial towards the *Muslimin* and then recited the *ayat* at the beginning of *surah* ar-Rum where it

¹⁴ *Minhaj as-Sunnah*, v. 3, p. 60.

¹⁵ See al-Khudayr, *Jabl wat-Tibas al-Hal*.

¹⁶ Surah al-Maidah: 93.

states the believers will rejoice at the victory of the Romans over the Persians. Thus he said elections are the just like this in that you can prefer one *kafir* over the other.

I do not want to cite a consensus on this issue but I will say confidently that you will be hard pressed to find any person who could come close to being considered an *'alim* or a *talib al-'ilm* declare ibn 'Uthaymin a *kafir*, *murtadd* who left the fold of Islam at the drop of a dime after he gave that *fatwa*. You will find over-zealous brothers declare *takefir* over it but in reality they speak without knowledge and without knowing what the *mubaqqiqin* of the *ummah* are upon.¹⁷ That is not to say no one with knowledge has declared *takefir* of ibn 'Uthaymin for allying with *murtaddin* against *mumabhidin* or giving *bay'ah* to a *taghut*, acting as his loyal soldier.¹⁸

In the above case example, ibn 'Uthaymin thought elections carried another meaning than the *kufri* meaning that we, due to the favor of Allah, know it to be. He came with a *tawil* of the issue and permitted a part of democracy while disbelieving in the core of it, which is giving the authority to rule or legislate to other than Allah. Him being aware that the winner of the elections will rule by other than what Allah revealed is not sufficient for him to fall into *kufir* as he did not intend to give a *fatwa* to rule by other than what Allah revealed or to hand over the right to rule to other than Allah. The *fatwa* may imply and necessitate that but he did not intend this *lazim* (implication) of *kufir*.¹⁹ And as it is known among the people of knowledge: the *lazim* of someone's speech is

¹⁷ One of the *ikhwah* asked Shaykh Abu Salman as-Sumali about contemporary scholars who permitted participating in democratic elections, and he replied: "... if he knew the *haqiqah al-hal* (the true nature of the matter) and what the direct outcome of this democratic process was and that it *cannot* be split up due to it being from those matters that does not accept being split up and indulging in part of it is indulging in all of it, then, he is a *kafir* individually. Otherwise, we would require that the case be explained to him and the part where he made a mistake in his view clarified before declaring *takefir* of him."

¹⁸ This is the *manat* of *kufir* for those who declared *takefir*, not the issue of elections.

¹⁹ To stress: no one should understand this as "intending *kufir*". And no one should understand this as giving an excuse due to ignorance in relation to major *shirk*. Those who can not separate between "intending *kufir*" and "intending the *kufri* meaning", and giving an "excuse due to ignorance" and "ignorance of the *haqiqah*" is due to his own lack of understanding and reading.

not his own speech.²⁰

This is in-line with the understanding of the *Salaf* when the reasons of *kufr* are new and people speak on them without knowing their implications. The *Salaf* would make a distinction between *takfir* of a statement in a theoretical sense and *takfir* of a specific individual, as well. Thus Imam Ahmad, and others from the leading scholars (*rahimahumullah*), did not declare *takfir* of every single person who called to or said the Quran was created, even though they said saying the Quran is created is *kufr*. Shaykhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) did not declare *takfir* of those who debated with him from the Jahmiyyah inclined Mu'tazilah, even though he said their speech was *kufr*. He also said:

The *tahqiq*²¹ regarding this is that a statement could be *kufr*, like some of the sayings of the Jahmiyyah who said Allah does not speak and won't be seen in the Hereafter. However, it is obscure to some people that it is *kufr*. So *takfir* of whoever said it is generalized, as the *Salaf* would say: whoever said the Quran is created is a *kafir*, and: whoever said Allah won't be seen in the Hereafter is a *kafir*. But a specific person does not disbelieve until the proof is established against him... Similarly, whoever denies the obligation of *salah*, *zakah*, or permits alcohol and fornication but did so due to a *tawil* - and the clearness of these rulings among the *Muslimin* is greater than the apparentness of that (i.e., what was mentioned in the beginning) - and if he made a mistaken interpretation regarding these rulings he is not judged with *kufr* until it is clarified to him and he is asked to repent from it (i.e., not to do or say it again), just as the *Sahabah* did concerning the group who permitted alcohol. Thus other than that is more deserving.²²

And he said: "Concerning *takfir*, what is correct is that whoever strove from

²⁰ There is a delicate scholarly dispute concerning *takfir* of the *lazim* of one's speech but it appears that it is more linguistic in nature, *wallahu a'lam*. Nevertheless, that doesn't affect us here.

²¹ Meaning, what is affirmed and verified after research.

²² *Majmu' al-Fatawa*, v. 7, p. 619.

the *ummah* of Muhammad (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and had the intention to follow the truth but fell into a mistake does not disbelieve. Rather, he will be forgiven for his mistake.”²³

Additionally, the leadings scholars of *Ablus-Sunnah wal-Jama‘ah* have agreed upon a mistake coming from a *mujtahid* being a preventative of *kufr* when he is intent on following the Prophet (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) and not deliberately going against the sacred texts. Some of the proofs from the Quran and Sunnah for that are:

Allah (*‘azza wa jall*) said: “There is no sin on you concerning that in which you made a mistake, except in regard to what your hearts deliberately intend. And Allah is ever Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful.”²⁴

And He (*ta‘ala*) said: “Allah will not call you to account for that which is unintentional in your oaths, but He will call you to account for that which your hearts have earned. And Allah is Oft-Forgiving, Most Forbearing.”²⁵

And He (*tabaraka wa ta‘ala*) stated: “Our Lord! Do not punish us if we forget or make a mistake.”²⁶ Commenting on this is the Prophet (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) who related that Allah (*ta‘ala*) accepted this *du‘a* and said: “Verily, I have done so (i.e., accepted the *du‘a*).”²⁷

And on the authority of ibn ‘Abbas (*radiyallahu ‘anhuma*), the Prophet (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “Verily, Allah has overlooked for me the mistakes and forgetfulness of my *ummah*, and what they were forced to do.”²⁸

²³ Ibid, v. 12, p. 180.

²⁴ Surah al-Ahzab: 5.

²⁵ Surah al-Baqarah: 225.

²⁶ Surah al-Baqarah: 286.

²⁷ Collected by Muslim on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (*radiyallahu ‘anhu*).

²⁸ Collected by ibn Majah, ibn Hibban, at-Tabarani, and others. Ahmad Shakir said: “[The chain] of ibn Majah is disconnected, but the chains with ibn Hibban and at-Tabarani are connected and authentic” (*‘Umdah at-Tafsir*).

And on the authority of Anas ibn Malik (*radiyallahu ‘anhu*), who said the Prophet (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “Verily, Allah is more pleased with the repentance of His slave than a person who has his camel in a waterless desert carrying his provision of food and drink and lost it. He, having lost all hope, lies down in the shade and is grieve stricken about his camel; when all of a sudden he finds that camel standing before him. He takes hold of its reins and then out of extreme happiness shouts: ‘O Allah, You are my slave and I am Your lord!’ Thus commits this mistake out of extreme joy.”²⁹

And on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (*radiyallahu ‘anhu*), the Prophet (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) said: “A man used to spend lavishly on himself, and when he approached death he advised his children saying: ‘When I die, burn me and throw my ashes into the winds at the sea. By Allah, if Allah was to gain power over me, then He will inflict me with a punishment that He has not inflicted upon anyone before me.’ Thus they did so. Then Allah said to the earth to collect his remains, and he was made to stand. Allah said to him: ‘What made you do that?’ The man said: ‘Fear of you, O my Lord.’ So he was forgiven due to that.”³⁰

“This man doubted the power of Allah and doubted that He would restore him if his remains were scattered,” Shaykhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (*rahimahullah*) said commenting on this narration. “In fact, he believed that he would not be resurrected; and this is *kufur* according to the consensus of the *Muslimin*. However, he was ignorant and did not know about that. But he was a believer who feared that Allah would punish him, so He forgave him because of that. The who has a mistaken interpretation from the people of *ijtihad* and is keen to follow the Messenger (*sallallahu ‘alayhi wa sallam*) is even more deserving of forgiveness than such a person.”³¹

But know, *akhi fillah*, that there is no person of falsehood except that he has with him a mistaken interpretation and that not every *tawil* is upon one level.

²⁹ Collected by Muslim.

³⁰ Agreed upon.

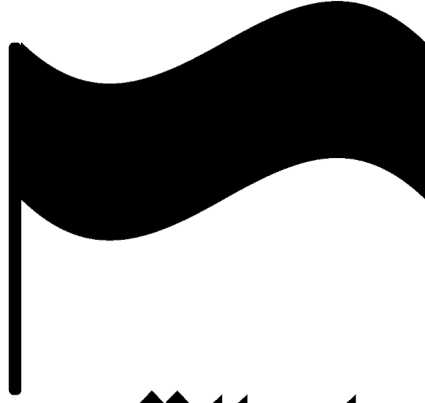
³¹ *Majmu’ al-Fatawa*, v. 3, p. 231.

From them is what is manifest falsehood and is clear in opposition to the sacred texts, and the likes from this type of interpretations is of no benefit and is not an excuse for the person who comes with it from *kufr* being attached to him. This level of *tawil* is the excuse that Iblis put forward when he arrogantly refused to obey one command from Allah: "I am better than him; You created me from fire and him from mud."³² And from them is what is not as clear and mentioned herein. The likes of these require the implications to be explained and the removal of misconceptions in order for the proof to be established. So that afterwards, if he was to leave it and insist upon falsehood, he would fall into *kufr* - but not before.

This has been a summary, and to really understand the issue takes time and careful reading and study of the works of the *'ulama*. Therefore, it is upon the common Muslim to fear Allah and humble himself enough to recognize that he does not have sufficient knowledge to speak about this issue and the issue of *kufr* and *takfir* in general, let alone apply it upon certain, specific individuals. The Muslim should declare *takfir* what Allah and His messenger declared *takfir* of in a general sense while leaving the delicate issues to those with knowledge. *Takfir* is not something particular to the *mufti* or judge, like the people of misguidance today proclaim, and the common Muslim is obligated at times to declare *takfir* of clear *kuffar* and risks falling into *kufr* or *fisq* if he does not, but there are some matters and instances where it is not permissible for the common Muslim and those with little, superficial knowledge to declare *takfir* based on their own thinking. It is upon them to imitate the *'ulama* and refer the matter to the people of *'ilm* and to study how the *'ulama* got to the conclusion outlined in this essay, if they are striving to be students of knowledge. This could be difficult for some but easy for those whom Allah has mercy upon, and we ask Allah to shower us with His mercy.

And Allah knows best. May He send *salah* and *salam* upon our prophet Muhammad, his family, his companions, and whoever follows his guidance.

³² Surah al-'Araf: 12.



أهل التوحيد

Publications